

questions as “When?” “Where?” “Who?” “What?” and “How?”. Typically, the time, place, persons, and circumstances involved in an incident may be established by a simple report, but its cause and the resulting damage may require extensive effort to obtain all the pertinent facts.

(b) The object of the investigation is to gather, with the least possible delay, the best available evidence without accumulating excessive evidence concerning any particular fact. The claimant is often an excellent source of such information and should be contacted early in the investigation, particularly when there is a question as to whether the claim was timely filed.

**§ 536.39 Use of experts, consultants and appraisers.**

(a) ACOs or CPOs will budget operation and maintenance (O&M) funds for the costs of hiring property appraisers, accident reconstructionists, expert consultants to furnish opinions, and medical specialists to conduct independent medical examinations (IMEs). Other expenses to be provided for from O&M funds include the purchase of documents, such as medical records, and the hiring of mediators. See § 536.53(b). Where the cost exceeds \$750 or local funds are exhausted, a request for funding should be directed to the Commander USARCS, with appropriate justification. The USARCS AAO must be notified as soon as possible when an accident reconstruction is indicated.

(b) Where the claim arises from treatment at an Army MTF, the MEDDAC commander should be requested to fund the cost of an independent consultant's opinion or an IME.

(c) The use of outside consultants and appraisers should be limited to claims in which liability or damages cannot be determined otherwise and in which the use of such sources is economically feasible, for instance, where property damage is high in amount and not determinable by a government appraiser or where the extent of personal injury is serious and a government IME is neither available nor acceptable to a claimant. Prior to such an examination at an MTF, ensure that the necessary

specialists are available and a prompt written report may be obtained.

(d) Either an IME or an expert opinion is procured by means of a personal services contract under the Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR), part 37, 48 CFR 37.000 *et seq.*, through the local contracting office. The contract must be in effect prior to commencement of the records review. Payment is authorized only upon receipt of a written report responsive to the questions asked by the CJA or claims attorney.

(e) Whenever a source other than claims personnel is used to assist in the evaluation of a claim in which medical information protected by HIPAA is involved, the source must sign an agreement designed to protect the patient's privacy rights.

**§ 536.40 Conducting the investigation.**

(a) The methods and techniques for investigating specific categories of claims are set forth in DA Pam 27-162, paragraphs 2-25 through 2-34. The investigation of medical malpractice claims should be conducted by a CJA or claims attorney, using a medical claims investigator.

(b) A properly filed claim must contain enough information to permit investigation. For example, if the claim does not specify the date, location or details of every incident complained of, the claimant or legal representative should be required to furnish the information.

(c) Request the claimant or legal representative to specify a theory of liability. However, the investigation should not be limited to the theories specified, particularly where the claimant is unrepresented. All logical theories should be investigated.

**§ 536.41 Determination of liability—generally.**

(a) Under the FTCA, the United States is liable in the same manner and to the same extent as a private individual under like circumstances in accordance with the law of the place where the act or omission giving rise to the tort occurred (28 U.S.C. 2673 and 2674). This means that liability must rest on the existence of a tort cognizable under state law, hereinafter referred to as a state tort. A finding of

state tort liability requires the litigating attorney to prove the elements of duty, breach of duty, causation, and damages as interpreted by federal case law.

(b) The foregoing principles and requirements will be followed in regard to tort claims against the United States under other subparts, with certain exceptions noted within the individual subparts or particular tort statutes.

(c) Interpretation will be made in accordance with FTCA case law and also maritime case law where applicable. Additionally, a noncombat activity can furnish the basis for a claim under subparts C, F, and J of this part. Noncombat activities include claims arising out of civil works, such as inverse condemnation.

(d) Federal, not state or local, law applies to a determination as to who is a federal employee or a member of the armed forces. Under all subparts, the designation "federal employee" excludes a contractor of the United States. See 28 U.S.C. 2671. See however, § 536.23(b)(4)(ii) concerning personal services contractors. For employment identification purposes apply FTCA case law in making a determination.

(e) Federal, not state or local, law applies to an interpretation of the SOL under all subparts. Minority or incompetence does not toll the SOL. Case law developed under the FTCA will be used in other subparts in interpreting SOL questions.

(f) Under the FTCA state or local law is used to determine scope of employment and under other subparts for guidance.

#### § 536.42 Constitutional torts.

A claim for violation of the U.S. Constitution does not constitute a state tort and is not cognizable under any subpart. A constitutional claim will be scrutinized in order to determine whether it is totally or partially payable as a state tort. For example, a Fifth Amendment taking may be payable in an altered form as a real estate claim. For further discussion see DA Pam 27-162, paragraph 2-36.

#### § 536.43 Incident to service.

(a) A member of the armed forces' claim for personal injury or wrongful death arising incident to service is not payable under any subpart except to the extent permitted by the receiving State under §§ 536.114 through 536.116 (Claims arising overseas); however, a claim by a member of the United States Armed Forces for property loss or damage may be payable under AR 27-20, chapter 11 or, if not, under subparts C, E, F, or G of this part. Derivative claims and claims for indemnity are also excluded.

(b) Claims for personal injury or wrongful death by members of a foreign military force participating in a joint military exercise or operation arising incident to service are not payable under any subpart. Claims for property loss or damage, but not subrogated claims, may be payable under subpart C of this part. Derivative claims and claims for indemnity or contribution are not payable under any subpart.

NOTE TO § 536.43: For further discussion see DA Pam 27-162, paragraph 2-37.

#### § 536.44 FECA and LSHWCA claims exclusions.

A federal or NAFI employee's personal injury or wrongful death claim payable under the Federal Employees Compensation Act (FECA) or the Longshore and Harbor Workers Compensation Act (LSHWCA) is not payable under any subpart. Derivative claims are also excluded but a claim for indemnity may be payable under certain circumstances. A federal or NAFI employee's claim for an incident-to-service property loss or damage may be payable under AR 27-20, chapter 11 or, if not, under subparts C, D, F, G, H or J of this part. For further discussion see DA Pam 27-162, paragraph 2-38.

#### § 536.45 Statutory exceptions.

This topic is more fully discussed in DA Pam 27-162, paragraph 2-39. The exclusions listed below are found at 28 U.S.C. 2680 and apply to subparts C, D, F, and H and §§ 536.107 through 536.113 (Claims arising in the United States) of subpart G, except as noted therein, and not to subparts E, J or §§ 536.107